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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
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INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000788

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/C
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS FOLLOWING REBEL ACTION IN KHARTOUM

REF: A. KHARTOUM 716
[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 718

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Following last week's armed engagements in Omdurman between JEM and the GOS forces, Sudanese authorities have begun a widespread campaign of random arrests, detainee torture and newspaper censorship. While many have been released, 150 individuals remain under arrest, and one newspaper remains shuttered. End summary.

UNMIS CONFIRMS 200 ARRESTS, 3 EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

[1](#)2. (U) UNMIS Human Rights Team Leaders Marc Vincent met with poloff and OTIoff Monday, May 19 to discuss human rights issues following last week's fighting between rebels in the Justice and Equality Movement and government forces. Khartoum is awash in rumors that thousands of Sudanese have been arrested since the conflict. UNMIS HR positively confirmed only 200 arrests, with 50 released after detention and torture, and 150 still held. Eyewitness corroboration and subsequent investigations have suggested that security forces performed three extrajudicial executions following the conflict - one Darfuri student pulled from his university dormitory, one Zaghawa woman protesting as police arrested her brother, and one adult beaten severely before dying.

[1](#)3. (U) UNMIS human rights told emboffs that released detainees' reports of their arrests are uniformly consistent. Authorities were targeting Darfuris, particularly Zaghawas, or those who bear a physical resemblance to people from Darfur. Pulled from buses or dragged from their homes in Omdurman, almost all were arrested because they were unable to produce immediate identification. One Sudanese lawyer who visited Khobar prison reported seeing about 140 people, many of whom were bleeding, had broken limbs, and were naked; few could walk and none had received medical treatment. Sudanese authorities are not yet granting international organizations access to these prisons.

[1](#)4. (U) UNMIS human rights has requested access to the neighborhoods of conflict in Omdurman to investigate civilian casualties, but Sudanese authorities have granted access only to one site - a brick factory where JEM rebel mortar fire killed five civilians. The reinstatement of the curfew in Omdurman has limited information and access in and out of the sprawling Khartoum suburb.

SPG GUEST IN FEBRUARY, NISS "GUEST" IN MAY

[1](#)5. (U) Poloff spoke on May 19 with Abdelaziz Sam, general counsel of the Sudanese Liberation Movement and secretary of legal affairs for the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority. (Note: Sam visited Washington in February 2008 as a guest of the Sudan Programs Group

(SPG), meeting with A/S Frazer and SPG to discuss Darfur peace process issues. End note.) At 2:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 11, Sam and his relatives awoke to the sound of police officers kicking in the door at their home in Omdurman. Sam protested, saying he was a government official, and attempted to show his identification to the men. Sam and two male relatives were immediately arrested, bound with their hands behind their backs, and forced into a waiting vehicle of the central police force. During the journey, three officers of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) administered a thorough beating to the men, opening wounds on their arms, backs and legs. Transported first to one location, beaten further, and then transported to another, the men were bound until 7:30 that morning, when Sam was abruptly untied and led into the office of a NISS officer. The officer apologized for Sam's treatment, and Sam and his family members returned to Omdurman in a government vehicle. Sam suffered a concussion, bruises, and several deep wounds on his body.

NEWSPAPERS CENSORED BY SECURITY SERVICES

¶6. (U) Already restrictive, government censorship of media in Khartoum has increased since the fighting. Newspaper editors have reported that recently, censors are restricting the publication of any articles that refer to detention, human rights violations, and torture. The sensationalist Arabic daily "Alwan" published an article on May 14 detailing the possible loss of a Sudanese MiG-29 during the fighting. Salah Gosh, head of NISS, issued a decree suspending "Alwan" from publication, freezing its assets and property, and also filed a police complaint against the editor. "Alwan" has not published since the alleged incident.

KHARTOUM 00000788 002 OF 002

SUDANESE GOVERNMENT CONFIRMS ARRESTS, DENIES TORTURE

¶7. (U) On Tuesday, May 20, Charge Fernandez met with Abdelmoneim Taha, Rapporteur of the GOS's Advisory Council for Human Rights (and brother of VP Ali Osman Taha). Taha essentially confirmed UNMIS HR's numbers, stating that 69 individuals are currently being held by civilian authorities, and 90 other arrestees have not yet been handed over to civilian authorities for prosecution. Sudanese prosecutors plan that all arrestees will be tried in civilian courts, not in military courts. Taha added that over 400 people arrested during the initial sweeps were either released quickly, or were cleared and released after reviews of their cases. Taha denied that authorities had beaten, tortured or executed any individuals, saying that perhaps JEM fighters had donned Sudanese uniforms to execute civilians.

¶8. (U) Comment: Sudanese authorities struggled to react coherently to the JEM attack and its aftermath, and the heavy-handed security services lashed out aggressively at Darfuri residents of Omdurman suspected of conspiring with or supporting JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim, throwing adherence to basic human rights aside. Many observers expected the regime's reaction to be even worse, and the government does appear to be taking a less aggressive stance this week, however reports of continued sporadic detentions persist. That the government and UNMIS Human Rights agree on the approximate number of arrestees still under detention is positive and shows a degree of collaboration; the next task for UNMIS will be to gain access to the detained and ensure they receive fair trials in civilian courts.

FERNANDEZ